

scrutiny. The pride and purpose Paul took from being a part of that oversight mechanism were evident in the seriousness with which he approached his work. I am personally grateful to Paul for everything he did on the committee's behalf.

Paul plans to spend his retirement with Margo, the great love of his life, at his side. He intends to travel, read, and walk the woods of the Rock Creek Park where he has found so much comfort and solace over the years. The son of European immigrants, who emigrated himself from Canada when he was 4 years old, Paul's story is a distinctly American one. Everyone who got to play a role in it these past 16 years is better for it.

It gives me great joy to publicly thank Paul for his contributions to the work of the committee, the integrity of congressional oversight, and the security of this great Nation. He has been a credit to what we do from the moment he joined the staff.

Congratulations and best of luck to you in retirement, Paul. Neither your expertise, your good humor, nor your wise counsel will soon be replaced.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### TRIBUTE TO CHIEF JON SIMPSON

• Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam President, I rise today to recognize Bentonville Police Chief Jon Simpson whose dedication to law enforcement and community service will be deeply missed following his retirement as chief of the Bentonville Police Department.

Chief Simpson's dedication is grounded in his strong roots to northwest Arkansas as a Bentonville native and graduate of the University of Arkansas. He established a career in public safety, first in the security division of Walmart Stores, Inc., before transitioning to work for the city as a patrol officer in 1994, where his service quickly stood out. After only 2 years with the Bentonville Police Department, Jon was named officer of the year.

From there, the chief held numerous supervisory positions and led by example, inspiring officers in both the patrol and criminal divisions. He was promoted to a command staff member in 2006 and, in 2011, was appointed chief of the Bentonville Police Department. In these leadership roles, Chief Simpson reorganized the rank structure of the department, added personnel with further opportunities for advisory positions, and upgraded the department's vehicles and equipment. Additionally, he led an extensive renovation to the police department building that added a bomb squad facility, emergency communication center, criminal investigations building, and emergency operations center.

The Bentonville community's rapid growth and unique challenges certainly shaped Chief Simpson's tenure. He recognized

the high expectations of Bentonville citizens and was encouraged to do more to ensure his officers lived up to those standards. That approach led to the incredible level of safety and security within the Bentonville community today. Chief Simpson's impact has also been recognized beyond his own department. Recently, the Arkansas Fraternal Order of Police in Little Rock recognized him with its Outstanding Police Chief Award.

Chief Simpson has demonstrated a relentless pursuit to improve himself, his team, and the community he served throughout his career. I applaud his dedicated, decades-long commitment to law enforcement and the safety of his fellow Arkansans. He is a true public servant who has strengthened law and order in Bentonville. It has been an honor to work with him during his tenure, and I wish him all the best in his next endeavor.●

##### TRIBUTE TO BRENDAN O'NEILL

• Mr. COONS. Madam President, I rise today to honor a dedicated public servant of the First State, an attorney, community leader, and friend to many, who this summer concludes a distinguished legal career of more than 45 years.

Attorney Brendan O'Neill of Wilmington, DE, wore many hats during his career: county and Federal prosecutor, a criminal defense lawyer in private practice, and chief public defender.

Delaware is known as a State of neighbors, and when it comes to Brendan O'Neill, there is no better neighbor. Brendan was, for a decade, my actual next-door neighbor, and we even studied and took the Delaware bar exam together in 1992.

Looking back on his long legal career, Brendan reminded his wife, Liz O'Neill, about all of the positions he has held over the years.

"I've had a very interesting professional life. It's been a lot of fun," Brendan said, adding as he often does, jokingly, "I've done everything but make money."

Brendan has had a truly remarkable run. Before I offer some sentiments and well wishes from family and friends, it is only appropriate to chronicle his career.

After graduating from the UC Davis School of Law in 1975, Brendan became a prosecutor in the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office, transitioning later to a Federal prosecutor in the U.S. Attorney's Office there.

Following those early years, Brendan started a criminal defense practice, O'Neill and Young, in Santa Monica, which overlooked beautiful Palisades Park and the iconic beach on Ocean Avenue. That practice, cofounded with his college friend, Wayne Young, operated from 1979 to 1993.

It was then, Liz said, that Brendan was "deported from California" to

Delaware, where he landed a position as a lawyer in the civil division of the Delaware Department of Justice.

In 1995, Brendan launched what would become a 26-year career in the Delaware Public Defender's Office. In May 2009, Governor Jack Markell tapped Brendan to be the chief public defender, a position of trust he fulfilled for 12 years.

"Brendan O'Neill was a fierce advocate for his clients and a key proponent for the right of all accused to have a competent defense," former Governor Markell said. "His was one of the most important nominations I ever made, and I'm not the least bit surprised he is widely recognized as having been a highly effective public defender. Delaware is better for his service, and I am proud to be associated with this intelligent, joyful, passionate, and competent leader. I have no doubt he will continue to be a widely respected member of the Delaware community in retirement."

During his 12 years as Delaware's chief public defender, Brendan and his team overhauled the system for providing indigent criminal defense by creating the office of defense services, or ODS, which now includes the public defender's office and the office of conflicts counsel.

Brendan implemented the practice of vertical representation statewide in all courts. Attorneys with ODS successfully challenged the constitutionality of Delaware's death penalty statute. He acquired additional office space for ODS's Kent County and Sussex County practices and increased the focus on holistic defense to address clients' ongoing needs and issues.

On top of those accomplishments, ODS was voted as one of the best workplaces in Delaware for 10 consecutive years.

Being a public defender is not an easy job. People outside of the legal profession often asked Brendan how he could represent folks who allegedly committed terrible crimes. Liz said that she was often curious about that herself, knowing the nature of his responsibility.

Brendan generally responded, Liz said, by reminding folks that public defenders represent people who were accused of crimes and that the American legal system was founded on the presumption of innocence. Brendan often made the analogy that we don't want doctors who chastise us about how we got our medical condition. We want doctors who listen to us and help us with our problems.

The same goes for lawyers. We want them to fight for us, Brendan said, and help us get the best possible outcome. He often has held that there is no greater pressure than representing an innocent person. As a defense attorney, the facts are often not on your side, so you do the best you can to put on your case.

Brendan's career is full of people he has helped in very stressful situations,

facing potential consequences from losing their license, their freedom, or their life. His clients benefited from his nonjudgmental nature, generous heart, good humor, practical approach, understanding, and kindness.

"I can only count on one hand, the times when he couldn't see the good in his client," Liz said. "In those cases, he always fought for someone close to them, a mother, wife, son, or daughter."

Despite the odds and the outcomes, Liz said, Brendan was consistently supportive of his clients, sometimes even providing them with practical things like Liz's favorite pair of sweatpants, which happened to be in the backseat of his car.

He was a constant source of encouragement and positivity to many Delawareans, whether it was the father saying goodbye to his teenage son found guilty or the girlfriend of a drug dealer starting anew in the witness protection program. Brendan often stayed in touch with the family and friends of his clients long after the verdict came down.

Brendan always fought hard for his clients, giving them and their loved ones his best shot. The courtroom was theater to Brendan, and he thrived on being prepared and at the top of his game.

"I remember many nights listening to a closing argument at the dining room table with a cardboard box as a podium and charts taped to the walls as he practiced his speech," Liz fondly remembered.

Brendan is a person who respects everyone's role in the court system. He often would go out of his way to get to know the people who made it happen, including the bailiffs, court reporters, clerks, judges, and the "other side," depending on his role as a prosecutor or a defense attorney.

Many Delawareans don't know that Brendan had a thriving pro-bono practice over the years. He counseled countless teens, young adults, and their parents about legal problems, things such as DUIs, disorderly conduct, speeding tickets, etc. He was there to provide nonjudgmental guidance for legal issues and emotional support.

Along with his pro-bono effort, Brendan volunteered innumerable hours over the years as a board member for organizations such as the Central YMCA, Catholic Charities, Salesianum School—and his current role as the chair of Autism Delaware, an organization close to his heart.

Brendan is a person who embraces new beginnings. He looks forward in times of uncertainty, disappointment, success, and happiness and encourages others to do the same. There are so many examples, but the biggest one is leaving his California-based law practice, taking and passing the Delaware bar after 17 years of already being an attorney, and starting anew in Delaware.

Besides all of the volunteer work and his impressive career as our top public defender, Brendan's hallmark is serving his clients, coworkers, friends, and family well. His five children—Brendan, Eamon, Brian, Claire, and Rainey—are paramount in his mind and life.

If you are on his team, he is in your corner. Claire O'Neill Peabody, who interned at the public defender's office for a summer, wasn't exactly sure what her dad did there other than being the chief cheerleader, making the rounds every day, stopping by offices telling people what a great job they were doing. He is known for motivating both his employees and his family with famous one-liners and other inspiring words.

"Dad has a phrase, saying, or one-liner for just about every situation life can throw at you," Claire said. "One of his many mantras is 'Next play!'"

That one-liner, in particular, is one that he says to his kids all the time. "While explaining it takes away from the one-liner magic," Claire said, "I am pretty sure he wants us to take what we've learned from a previous experience but focus on the next thing in front of you."

Her dad's own "next play" will include a lot of play: golf and tennis, two of his favorite activities. "He's earned it," Claire said. "So good luck on your next play, Duner! Hit em straight!"

Eamon O'Neill said one of his favorite things about his father is the ability to relish in the simple joys of life while they are happening. His dad does not need to lose something to appreciate it; he enjoys what he has while he has it.

"For as long as I can remember, he has encouraged me to do the same," Eamon said. "Often, this happened as we were driving to one of the thousands of soccer practices my dad selflessly took me to over the years. As we were getting close to the field, he would remind me of how great and how much fun practice is and how lucky I was to be playing a game I loved with my friends."

This lesson did not always stick with Eamon as a teenager, but he thinks about it often as an adult. "The ability to be present and grateful and enthusiastic during the small and routine moments of life," Eamon continued, "is something I love about dad and try to emulate every day."

Brian O'Neill, who plays offensive tackle for the Minnesota Vikings, said, "play hard, have fun" is one of his dad's most famous quotes. "He has said this to us a few thousand times over the years. The message is simple—give your best and have fun while doing it."

Brian said that his father has lived and exemplified that quote every day of his professional and personal life. "I know he gave his best—to his cases, clients, coworkers, and colleagues," Brian said. "I know damn well he also had so much fun along the ride. He always says if you love what you do,

you'll never work a day in your life. If I can have half the fun he did in my career—I know I'll have a chance!"

My family had the opportunity to get to know the O'Neills well. They lived next to us when we were in the Triangle Neighborhood in Wilmington. There was a fence between our yards, and we took that fence down; we were one big family.

Brendan is truly the salt of the earth. He is smart, loyal, and kind. He is funny and always makes everyone in the room feel welcome.

"You want Brendan on your team," my wife Annie said. "He takes everything in stride; he sticks by you. We love him, and he and his family fill our cup and our hearts!"

For me, Brendan epitomizes what it means to be a good attorney, a good father, and a good friend—really the best of Delaware, an immeasurably decent and kind person.

Along with so many in our State, Annie and I wish him and his family the best in retirement. To Brendan, as the old Irish blessing goes: "May good luck be your friend in whatever you do and may trouble be always a stranger to you."

For your extraordinary dedication to advancing justice in the State of Delaware, for all of the people whose lives you have positively impacted, and for the decades of service and sacrifice: Thank you.●

#### PRIVILEGED NOMINATION REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON SEPTEMBER 20, 2021

On request by Senator TOMMY TUBERVILLE, under the authority of S. Res. 116, 112th Congress, the following nomination was referred to the Committee on Homeland Security: Leona M. Bridges, of California, to be a Member of the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board for a term expiring October 11, 2023, vice William S. Jasien, term expired.

On request by Senator TOMMY TUBERVILLE, under the authority of S. Res. 116, 112th Congress, the following nomination was referred to the Committee on Homeland Security: Javier E. Saade, of the District of Columbia, to be a Member of the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board for a term expiring October 11, 2022, vice David Avren Jones, term expired.

On request by Senator TOMMY TUBERVILLE, under the authority of S. Res. 116, 112th Congress, the following nomination was referred to the Committee on Homeland Security: Stacie Olivares, of California, to be a Member of the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board for a term expiring September 25, 2024, vice Ronald David McCray, term expired.

On request by Senator TOMMY TUBERVILLE, under the authority of S. Res. 116, 112th Congress, the following nomination was referred to the Committee on Homeland Security: Dana Katherine Bilyeu, of Nevada, to be a